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## THE BELTED KINGFISHER.

*Ceryle Alcyon.*

This bird has a length of about 12—13 inches ; extent, 19—20 inches ; bill 2 inches, and tarsus very short. Feet and legs very slight and slender, in proportion to size and weight of bird. The inner toe is much shorter than the two others. The middle and outer toes are joined for more than half their length.



BELTED KINGFISHER.

The color of the upper parts is a slaty-blue ; tips of wings and tail black, crossed by dotted lines of white, giving an impression of bars.

Under colors white and chestnut ; the chestnut forming a band across front of throat and along sides of breast to the legs. A small white spot is formed in front of each eye. There is, also, a chin and ring encircling throat of white.

The crest is thin and long and nearly always carried erect. Each feather of it has a black stripe along the center ; the remaining portion of blue similar to upper parts. This gives the crest a slightly darker hue.

They are usually among the first dozen of migrants that arrive in the spring. The freezing of the smaller streams and the formation of ice along the margins of the larger streams seem to be the cause for this departure for the south. In the fall of the year 1889 they left some weeks before any ice was formed.

It inhabits the margins of streams, sitting for hours over the water, usually perched on a dead limb or stub, watching for small fish. When a fish is seen, it darts headlong from its perch, and the fish, if caught, is brought up in its beak.

In mid-summer they may be occasionally seen poised in mid-air above the water, hunting for fish.

A sand bank is chosen as a breeding place, and a hole, 6 or 8 feet in depth is excavated, the end of which is enlarged. Little or no attempt at nest building is made. Sometimes a few fish bones are found at the end.

The eggs are usually six in number ; white, spheroidal in shape and measure about 1.25x1.05.

A nest was observed five or six years ago in a sand bank, within fifteen feet of a much traveled highway. The parent birds were frequently seen perched on the telegraph wires or the peak of a barn just across the road.

C. C. M.

## WINTER BIRDS OF RALEIGH, N. C.

BY C. S. BRIMLEY.

131. *Lophodytes cucullatus*. Hooded Merganser.—Rather rare.
132. *Anas boschas*. Mallard.—Common.
139. *Anas carolinensis*. Green-winged Teal.—Have observed them several times in February.
144. *Aix sponsa*. Wood Duck.—Rather rare.
146. *Aythya americana*. Redhead.—Rather rare.
190. *Botaurus lentiginosus*. American Bittern.—Casual ; one killed here Dec. 6, 1886.
194. *Ardea herodias*. Great Blue Heron.—Occasional all winter.
208. *Rallus elegans*. King Rail.—Occasional.
221. *Fulica americana*. American Coot.—Occasional.
228. *Philohela minor*. American Woodcock.—Rather rare ; sometimes abundant in the migrations in December and February.
230. *Gallinago delicata*. Wilson's Snipe.—Occasional all winter.
273. *Ægialitis vocifera*. Killdeer.—Tolerably common.
289. *Colinus virginianus*. Bob-white.—Common.
310. *Meleagris gallopavo*. Wild Turkey.—Rare.
316. *Zenaidura macroura*. Mourning Dove.—Common.
325. *Cathartes aura*. Turkey Vulture.—Abundant.
326. *Catharista atrata*. Black Vulture.—Common ; usually seen in flocks, seldom singly.